



Richard Kenneth Dee

March 22, 1939 - January 14, 2022

Richard “Dick” Kenneth Dee, 82, passed away peacefully on Friday, January 14, 2022, in Cary, NC. He was born on March 22, 1939, in Ann Arbor, MI, to the late Thomas and Catherine (Sowinski) Dee.

Following his 1957 graduation from Sexton High School in Lansing, MI, Dick earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Landscape Architecture from Michigan State University where he also took pride in playing trombone in the Spartan Marching Band. He then attended the University of Michigan where he earned a Master’s Degree.

During the 1970’s, he was a partner in Johnson & Dee, a landscape architecture and urban design firm located in Avon, CT. Dick’s career also took him to Fort Lauderdale, FL and Wilmington, NC, working for EDSA, Inc., before settling in Durham, NC and finally Cary, NC as a freelance design and graphics consultant.

Dick was passionate about making his home beautiful and spent much of his free time tending to his perennial gardens and working on many yard and home improvements. He also was a talented watercolor artist and enjoyed singing in a barbershop quartet.

Dick is survived by his brother, Lynwood Dee (Janet) of Daytona Beach

Shores, FL, daughter Linda Spirko (Bill Burnette) of Westfield, MA, and son Richard Dee, Jr. (Chris) of Charlotte, NC. He also leaves behind three granddaughters, Jessica Spirko of Los Angeles, CA, Emma Ullmann (Matthew) of Granby, CT, and Peyton Dee (fiance' Dylan) of Charlotte, NC.

Dick's family would like to extend thanks to the staff of LiveWell Assisted Living in Cary, NC for their loving care during the past two years.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests those who wish to express sympathy to consider making a donation to the Alzheimer's Association (www.alz.org) in Dick's name. Memories and condolences can be left at www.wakefuneral.com.

Tribute Wall

BT

“ Just read that Johnson and Dee were the landscape architects for MLK's tomb in Atlanta GA.

Bill Thompson - December 20, 2022 at 06:17 PM

SL

“ I was first introduced to Dick, long before I met him. As a student, I was trying to learn the craft of drawing by tracing his sketches, plans and sections from an old graphics file we had in the Studio. A few years later, as a young designer at EDSA, I had a chance to work with him and see firsthand how amazing he truly was. But remarkably, it was not his drawing that impressed me the most, it was him as a person. Kind, funny, approachable, and collaborative, Dick was one of a kind.

He was an inspiration to generations of designers, and I am grateful to have known him. It would be hard to overstate the impact he has had on many of us.

We will miss you, Dick, but you will be long remembered here at EDSA. We send our love and prayers to your family.

All the best,

Scott LaMont, ASLA

scott lamont - February 10, 2022 at 05:40 PM

KG

“ One of my favorite persons in the world!

Amazing designer, colleague, friend and mentor. Dick always brought the best to all of our projects. Early in my time here at EDSA, I was introduced to Dick. We worked on multiple global project assignments together. He was kind of like our Navy Seal. Whenever we had a challenging opportunity in Joe Lalli's studio, Joe would enlist Dick to flush out ideas, styling and character of the projects. His renderings were always full of life. He would draw people enjoying the spaces we designed together. I loved working alongside Dick. A favorite memory is watching him draw as he animated the process with whistles, trumpet/trombone sounds and giggles as his illustrations came alive. No one compares.

Dick treated us all like family. He would share his wisdom and chat about the importance of being a good person. He carried himself with respect for everyone and spoke highly of his family as well. My wife Katrina and I send our sincerest condolences to his family and close friends. We are here in support and care if you need anything. His legacy is solid and I am sure there are many that will remember the good times we all had together. Dick will always be a positive inspiration.

With kind regards,

*Kona Gray, FASLA
Fort Lauderdale, Florida*

Kona Gray - February 10, 2022 at 11:47 AM

JO

Well put amigo.

John - February 10, 2022 at 12:19 PM

JG

“ I am going to miss Dick Dee. As a young designer at EDSA, our studio leader would bring him in for a project and he'd sit next to me for the week, just about every time. It was magic watching him draw, our half-baked notions would come to life with his ideas and incredible graphics. He made it look so easy and you could tell he was having fun. He never took credit for anything. He was always complimentary of everyone's inferior designs and graphics, even the really terrible stuff (with a smile). He made every project he touched better. We all copied his graphics and tried to use our "Dick Dee pens" (Black Rolling Writer) the best we could - still do 25 years later.

He kept to himself at night, but at least once during the week, Dick and I would go to dinner and have a few drinks and tell stories, and man did he have stories - mostly about the old days at EDSA, stories about Ed, stories about projects and places and projects he had worked on. Women we had known, adventures we had gotten into. We laughed over rusty nails (his drink, very dry vermouth, not sweet red) and he made me feel like I was part of the club. Even today when in the car with my girls I will break out into a mouth trumpet and tell stories about him. What a great friend and I am going to miss him. Condolences to his family and friends who knew him most.

John Galloway
Weston, Missouri

John Galloway - February 05, 2022 at 10:12 AM

MF

“*Dick was the most skilled and creative landscape architect I have ever met in 50 years of practice. His attention to detail and thoughtful design was exceeded only by his beautiful renderings. He handled commissions for my company for over 30 years. Our brochure features Dick's designs most prominently.*

He was a kind, calm, modest and measured man and our entire profession was advanced due to his contributions.

Once we were working on an island resort design (Walkers Cay the northern most island in the Bahama chain) and we had an idea for an artisans enclave. The premise was to set aside part of the marina for older Bahamians to pass on about-to-be-lost cultural and artistic skills to younger local craftspeople. A difficult idea to sell, and even more difficult to articulate graphically. In a single sketch Dick rendered the idea clearly, and designed the beautiful venue in which it was to be housed. It is like a fine painting. He was a pure poet and artist whose canvas was the world, whose sonnets were designs and whose verse was the built environment.

We lost a genius.

Michael T Redd FASLA

Michael Redd FASLA - February 03, 2022 at 05:59 PM